




Integrity



*When our actions
reflect our values
we are whole.*

HOLSTEE

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Integrity

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Nested within you is a set of virtues.

Dig deep, pull back the layers,
and discover what it means
to be you.



Integrity *noun*

in·teg·ri·ty | in-'te-grə-tē

A firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary © 2022

In this guide, learn how to tap into the power of Integrity to improve your inner well-being as well as the world around you. Dig into poetry, philosophy, and activities rooted in the teachings and research of the VIA Institute on Character, Aristotle, and Alan Cohen, among others.

Uncover your personal character strengths, those that enable you to move with the perfect balance of confidence and impact. Then learn three theories on how to think more critically about large-scale challenges.

Enjoy discovering and exploring your personal code of virtues and ethics so you can take charge of how you grow and influence those around you. Let's get started!

Two Kinds of Intelligence

There are two kinds of intelligence: one acquired, as a child in school memorizes facts and concepts from books and from what the teacher says, collecting information from the traditional sciences as well as from the new sciences.

With such intelligence you rise in the world. You get ranked ahead or behind others in regard to your competence in retaining information. You stroll with this intelligence in and out of fields of knowledge, getting always more marks on your preserving tablets.

There is another kind of tablet, one already completed and preserved inside you. A spring overflowing its springbox. A freshness in the center of the chest. This other intelligence does not turn yellow or stagnate. It's fluid, and it doesn't move from outside to inside through conduits of plumbing-learning.

This second knowing is a fountainhead from within you, moving out.

Rumi,

Translated by Coleman Barks

Warm-Up

Let's kick this guide off with a big question.



What does it mean to be a good person? List the qualities that come to mind.

Click on bars like these to open a new journal entry in Reflection.app with the prompt ready! **Bonus:** As part of your Holstee Membership, you get Premium access to Reflection.app — click now to give it a try!

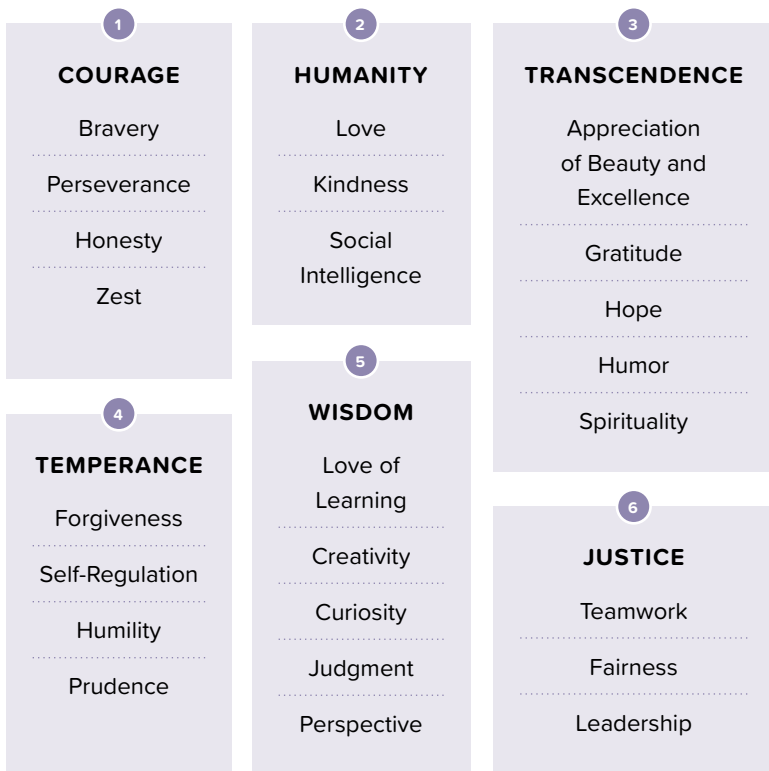


ANSWER THIS PROMPT IN REFLECTION.APP

Character Strengths

In the early 2000s, [Dr. Chris Peterson](#), [Dr. Martin Seligman](#), and a team of 55 social scientists set out to discover what virtues the world's religions, philosophies, and psychologies all have in common.

Now considered “the backbone of positive psychology,” this research team developed [the VIA Classification of Character Strengths](#): six universal virtues and their corresponding character strengths.



Their research found that **each person has, on average, at least five** of these 24 character strengths.



What are five of your signature character strengths?

- **Describe a recent time when you flexed one or more of your character strengths.**
- **How can you use your character strengths more often in your life?**

STUMPED?

Don't know your character strengths? Visit viacharacter.org to take the free character strengths survey.

“ *Human greatness does not lie in wealth or power, but in character and goodness. People are just people, and all people have faults and shortcomings, but all of us are born with a basic goodness.* ”

ANNE FRANK



ANSWER THIS PROMPT IN REFLECTION.APP

The Golden Mean

According to **Aristotle**, the father of western philosophy, identifying our virtues is important, but their real impact comes from us being able to put them into action — in the right way, at the right time, and with the right intention. He called the ability to do this the **Golden Mean**.

Golden Mean: Our moral behavior between two extremes — with excess at one extreme, and deficiency at the other end.

Let's take the character strength **bravery**, for example. Too little bravery can translate to *cowardice* while in excess it can become *rashness*. However, when we apply just the right amount of bravery — when we achieve the Golden Mean — it has the most impact on a situation.

Rashness

+

BRAVERY

—

Cowardice



Get a piece of paper and write in the middle of it the five signature character strengths you identified in the exercise on the previous page.

- Now, consider what happens when you use **too much** of each of these virtues in your actions. **Jot down your answer for each to the left of that character strength.**
- What about when **too little** of each virtue is applied? **Write the result to the right of each characteristic.**



ANSWER THIS PROMPT IN REFLECTION.APP

Weekly Challenge

Practice being aware of how your actions reflect what you believe.

The **VIA Institute on Character** identifies **honesty** as a key character strength because it allows us to experience a sense of “authentic wholeness.” We all stretch the truth from time to time — maybe to protect someone’s feelings, guard ourselves from criticism, or make getting through life a little easier. These aren’t necessarily harmful lies, but they’re also not entirely harmless — they add a layer of inauthenticity to our daily interactions.

Why do we say we’re fine when we’re actually having a tough day?

.....

Why might we make up an excuse to cancel plans with friends instead of just telling them we’re not feeling up for it?

.....

What is the underlying feeling or motivation behind not being completely honest in these situations?

This month, try to notice how honest you are, how you might mislead or put up a facade in certain moments, and how genuine you are (or aren’t) in your interactions.



Come back to this section every week and reflect on whether you are succeeding at being more honest and what the consequences have been.

Applied Ethics

For thousands of years, humans have tried to figure out how we should live our lives. This is the essential question of ethics.

For this exercise, we're going to focus on **applied ethics**, which deals with the difficult moral questions and issues we face as a society and in our personal lives. Applied ethics seeks to answer the following questions:

What **obligations** do we have to each other?

.....

Is this specific action **morally permissible**?

.....

Under what **conditions** are certain actions permissible?



Take a moment to reflect on and write down three or four big issues that as a society we generally have a difficult time agreeing upon.

Next, we'll break down three different theories — **utilitarianism**, **deontology**, and **virtue** — that we can use to understand applied ethics.



ANSWER THIS PROMPT IN REFLECTION.APP

1 UTILITARIANISM

The morality of actions depends on their “utility” or the happiness they produce; a consequentialist theory wherein **good actions maximize good outcomes for the most people.**

FURTHER READING:

- Jeremy Bentham
- John Stuart Mill
- Aristippus
- Epicurus
- David Hume

LIMITATIONS:

By what metric do we evaluate outcomes? Whose good should we aim to maximize? How do we calculate the goodness of an unknown outcome?

KEY QUESTION:

Does the outcome of this decision **maximize good** (and minimize harm) for the **most people**?

2 DEONTOLOGY

The morality of actions depends on intrinsic right or wrong. Unlike consequence-based theories, in deontology one doesn't weigh the costs and benefits, they **make decisions according to set rules or a code of conduct** (usually shared by a society, religion, profession, or cultural values). It's concerned with duty and obligation.

LIMITATIONS:

How do we learn what is intrinsically right or wrong? What do we do when our duties are in conflict with someone else's? How do we actually deal with any suffering that results?

FURTHER READING:

- Immanuel Kant
- Saint Augustine

KEY QUESTION:

Is this action right according to my **personal code, regardless of the outcome** it produces?

3 VIRTUE ETHICS

The morality of actions depends whether we act in line with worthy virtues. A virtue ethicist will **identify virtues that a moral or virtuous person embodies**, and this way of being guides them to consistently make “virtuous” choices.

LIMITATIONS:

How do we agree on what virtues are essential for a virtuous person to embody? Considering big issues, since most of us aren’t directly making policy decisions, how can we be sure to elect virtuous people to make the right decisions for us?

FURTHER READING:

- Socrates
- David Hume
- G. E. M. Anscombe
- Philippa Foot
- Martha Nussbaum

KEY QUESTION:

Am I being a **virtuous person**?

“ *There can be no happiness if the things we believe in are different from the things we do.* ”

FREYA STARK

Social Comparison Theory

In the early 1950s, social psychologist **Leon Festinger** sought to understand the innate human need to compare ourselves with others. Festinger found that our “comparison targets” are most often people in our orbits or close to us in age, career, or background.

Comparison typically falls into **two categories**:



UPWARD COMPARISON

Comparing yourself to someone in a perceived “higher” position when it comes to status, wealth, education, ability, or relationships. This might spark **motivation** but it can also fuel **jealousy**.



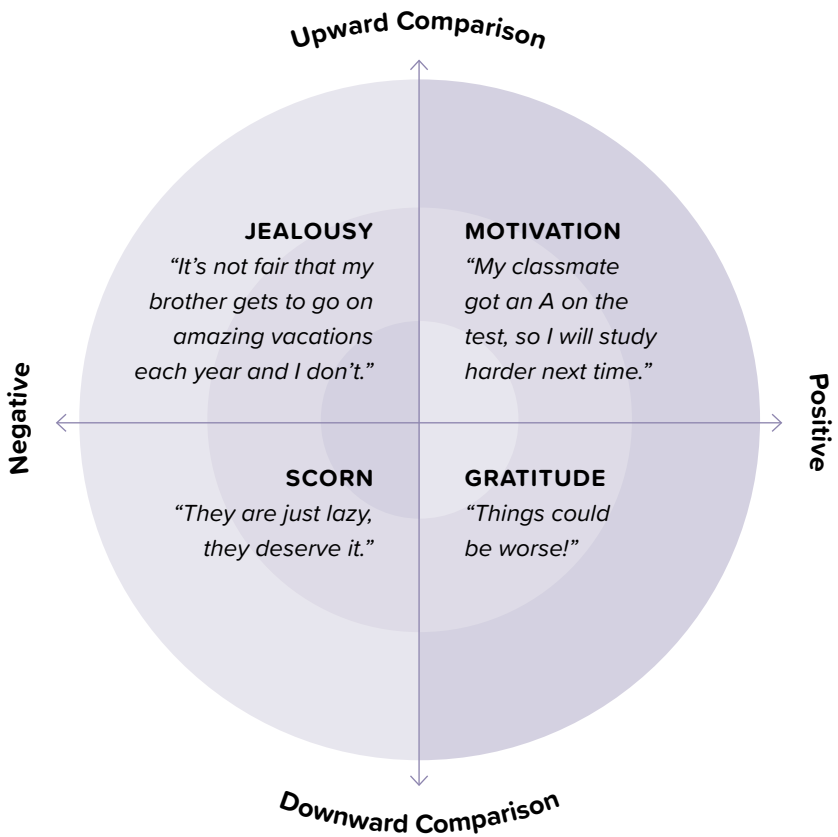
DOWNWARD COMPARISON

Comparing yourself to someone in a perceived “lower” position. It can help you realize how **fortunate** you are. It can also lead to being **scornful** of seemingly “lower status” people.

It’s enough that humans already tend to make these types of comparisons, but social media takes it to the next level. Not only does social media expose us to so many comparison targets, most are giving a narrow and highly curated view of their lives. Navigating this “comparison culture” is tricky.

“ *Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.* ”

OSCAR WILDE



So what can you do about it?

Compare yourself to yourself. Define success on your terms, set your own goals, and measure progress against where you've been and where you want to go!

Reflect & Discuss

Use these questions for self-reflection or to spark meaningful conversations.

ICEBREAKERS

01
How did you learn right from wrong?

02
Is anything too serious to be joked about?

03
Do intentions matter more or less than actions?

04
Do you believe more in justice or forgiveness?

DEEPER QUESTIONS

*When was the last time
you changed your mind about
a firmly held belief?*

*When have you had to stand up
for someone or something?*

*When was the last time
you felt morally compromised?
What did you do?*

“ *It’s your life, but only if you make it so. The standards by which you live must be your own standards, your own values, your own convictions in regard to what is right and wrong, what is true and false, what is important and what is trivial.*

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

Copyright © Holstee Inc. 2022 — This kit is inspired by our readings from Rumi, Dr. Chris Peterson, Dr. Martin Seligman, Anne Frank, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Aristotle, the VIA Institute on Character, Veronica Roth, Freya Stark, Sonia Sotomayor, Leon Festinger, Oscar Wilde, Eleanor Roosevelt

For further reading and curated resources visit: holstee.com/integrity